GREEN LANTERNS ANNUAL

"The Inferiority Complex"

Andy Diggle

38 pages

First Draft
15 April 2018

Lettering Draft
29 April 2018

PAGE 1

1) BIG! Green Lanterns JESSICA CRUZ and SIMON BAZ zoom towards us through space, their emerald contrails ZIG-ZAGGING through an ASTEROID FIELD. The background is a beautiful NEBULA - the remnant of an ancient supernova.

TITLE
VAIKEA SYSTEM
SECTOR 4

RING - SIMON BAZ
Exiting superluminal space. Brace for deceleration.

SIMON BAZ
Whoa! Hard to believe this used to be the heart of an alien empire...
(link)
Nothing left but a mess of dead rock and dust!

RING - JESSICA CRUZ
Hitting the brakes, J-Bird! Hang onto your lunch!

JESSICA CRUZ
The Vaikeans were one of the very first races to be inducted into the Corps, way back in the day...
(link)
Thankfully not all of them were planetside when their sun went kablooey!

1) Two shot. Simon turns to Jessica as they fly.

SIMON BAZ
Isn't that exactly the kinda of thing us Lanterns are supposed to prevent?

JESSICA CRUZ
It was so long ago, nobody really knows for sure what happened. The archives were destroyed eons ago...
(link)
Now the legend of the Lost Lantern is just that - less history than myth.

2) On Simon, frowning.

SIMON BAZ
Wait, are you telling me we just travelled halfway across the galaxy to commemorate someone who maybe never even existed?

3) On Jessica, with a sad smile.

JESSICA CRUZ
Hey, myths have power too. The power to inspire.
(link)
And isn't that what the Corps is all about?

4) Wide. They're zooming away from us towards a barren, lifeless PLANET, still fairly distant here. Vaikea: a ball of dead rock.

JESSICA CRUZ
One Lantern stood alone against the forces of chaos.
(link)
When all hope seemed lost, he gave his life to hold the line...

PAGE 3

1) BIG! They SWOOP town towards the surface of the dead world. No atmosphere, so the sky is just stars and nebula. Dominating the barren landscape is a high-tech, city-sized COMPLEX shaped like a Green Lantern symbol. The inner ring is a vast amphitheater. A place of memorial for Vaikea's mythical Lost Lantern --

JESSICA CRUZ
The planet was laid waste, but his people survived. And every thousand years, the Vaikean diaspora commemorate his sacrifice...
(link)
Here at the Tomb of the Lost Lantern!

COMPUTER VOICE
Security scan detected. Responding.
(link)
Lanterns Simon Baz and Jessica Cruz, Sector 2814.
(link)
Authenticated. Entry authorized.

2) POV from inside a large airlock, the heavy doors open to the surface. Jessica and Simon swoop down toward us.

SIMON BAZ
Sounds like someone's been doing her homework!

JESSICA CRUZ
Are you kidding? I've been freaking out about this for like a month!

3) Standing inside the airlock now, Jessica turns to us with a slightly stressed grin, making light of her anxiety.

JESSICA CRUZ
What, you think I'm going to stand there and give a speech in front of thousands of the Corps' most well-respected Lanterns without preparing?
(link)
And stress eating?
(link)
And not sleeping?
(link)
Like, at all?

PAGE 4

1) Two-shot. Simon's back to us, our POV facing Jessica, so our focus is on her look of sudden dismay. If there's room in the panel, we might see the airlock doors closing behind them.

SIMON BAZ
Wait, you have to give a speech?

JESSICA CRUZ
Simon... We both do!
(link)
Didn't you read Hal's message?!

2) On Simon, now looking slightly worried.

SIMON BAZ
It didn't seem urgent so I guess I... skimmed it?

3) Wide. The inner doors begin to open, revealing Simon (brushing it off) and Jessica (now even more stressed). SOMEONE is waiting for them, back to us in the foreground, yet to be properly revealed...

SIMON BAZ
Aah, it's fine. I'll wing it.
(link)
Ring, I'm gonna need a concise summary of Vaikean history, culture, social etiquette... and the legend of the Lost Lantern.

RING - SIMON BAZ
Compiling. Ready.

JESSICA CRUZ
Wing it? You can't just--

YLI'LAATUA
(panel right)
Green Lanterns of Sector 2814.

4) BIG. The inner doors have opened to reveal YLI'LAATUA, the Vaikean Master of Ceremonies. He's a roughly bipedal insectoid wearing a formal Green Lantern uniform. Like all Vaikeans, "he" is asexual, unemotional, cold and formal. He scowls at us disapprovingly. Like the rest of the Vaikean memorial complex, the corridor behind him is high-tech, clean and sterile.

LETTERING NOTE: Maybe a distinctive ragged balloon style for Vaikean speech.

YLI'LAATUA
I am Master of Ceremonies Yli'Laatua.
(link)
The timing of your arrival is appropriate.
(link)
Your attire is inappropriate.
(link)
Nevertheless, acceptable.

PAGE 5

1) Slightly nonplussed, the humans step out to greet Yli'Laatua.

SIMON BAZ
Thanks, we--
(link)
... Wait, what?

YLI'LAATUA
Non-traditional uniforms.
(link)
Personal customization nevertheless within permissible bounds of Green Lantern Corps dress code.
(link)
Tsk.

2) On Simon, frowning, wondering what this guy's problem is.

SIMON BAZ
Uh... Thanks, I guess?

3) Jessica tries to seize the initiative. Smiling, she reaches out a hand to shake; but the alien gently recoils as if she's unclean.

JESSICA CRUZ
Yli'Laatua, it's a pleasure to meet you. And an honor to be invited to speak at the--

YLI'LAATUA
Physical contact is inappropriate.
(link)
Gratitude is inappropriate.
(link)
Protocol dictates speakers be designated according to numerical order by Sector.
(link)
Tsk.

4) Jessica is slightly peeved now, but hides it behind a forced smile. Hands on hips. A little too forcefully --

JESSICA CRUZ
Ooookay. Well, y'know what?
(link)
Thanks anyway!

5) Yli'Laatua walks away from us down the corridor. In the foreground, Jess and Simon turn to each other and shrug. Like, what is this guy's problem?

YLI'LAATUA
You shall follow at an appropriate distance.

SIMON BAZ
(small text)
When in Rome...

1) Yli'Laatua pauses and turns to us at the open door to a luxury suite.

YLI'LAATUA
Quarters have been prepared appropriate for gender-dimorphic species.
(link)
Are you a breeding pair?

2) Simon looks flustered. Jessica grins, taking it in her stride.

SIMON BAZ
Are we a--?
(link)
No! No way...
(link)
We don't-- I mean, not that I wouldn't-- I mean Jessica's totally--

JESSICA CRUZ
I think what Simon is trying to say is that we're just good friends. Colleagues?
(link)
Partners!
(link; small text)
... But not like that.

3) Big. They enter the luxury suite's central lounge area. In the middle of the room is a sunken circular sofa with a coffee table in the middle. A wide bay window looks out of the barren moonscape.

YLI'LAATUA
You shall be summoned at the appropriate time.
(link)
In the interim you may consume nutrients and perform ablutions as appropriate to your custom.

JESSICA CRUZ
Sounds like a party!

4) On Jessica, reining it in.

JESSICA CRUZ
Uh, I mean, that sounds... appropriate.

PAGE 7

1) LATER. Exterior shot of the suite's wide bay window.

SIMON BAZ
(from within)
Is it just me, or was I getting a totally weird vibe off that guy?
(link)
We do something to offend him, or...?

2) Jessica sits cross-legged on the sofa, poring over a green ring-construct book that lies open in her lap, like she's cramming for an exam. Stacks more construct-books piled up beside her, generated by her ring. She is now wearing a baggy cotton hoodie, sweat pants and socks. Comfort clothes. We might see steam coming from a bathroom in the background.

JESSICA CRUZ
Don't take it personally, Simon.
(link)
Vaikean society's a hierarchical gerontocracy ordered around courtesy, compliance and conformity...

3) Simon steps out of the steaming bathroom, pulling on a T-shirt. (He still wears his GL ring).

SIMON BAZ
So you're saying they're, like, super judgmental.

4) Two-shot. Across from Jess, Simon slumps on the sofa.

JESSICA CRUZ
Yep. No pressure.
(link)
Yli'Laatua actually lodged a formal objection to such a "new race" being included in the ceremony...

SIMON BAZ
New race? Hal's been in the Corps for years!

5) Jess looks up from her book with a worried grimace.

JESSICA CRUZ
No, I mean like he considers humanity to be a new race...
(link)
Because we've been sentient for a couple million years.

1) On Simon, dubious.

SIMON BAZ
... *Huh*.
(link)
And there was me thinking we'd come a long way in a couple centuries.

2) Anxious and frustrated, Jess waves her hand and the books vanish.

JESSICA CRUZ
And now it's like we have to... prove ourselves to them!

3) Simon leans forward, elbows resting on his knees, and gives us a reassuring, sympathetic smile.

SIMON BAZ
Your anxiety playing up?
(link)
C'mon, Jess, you've faced tougher challenges than this and you aced every one.

4) Jess paces, anxious, getting worked up.

JESSICA CRUZ
Gimme a falling moon or a homicidal space tyrant and I'm good to go. I know what to do.
(link)
But this? Public speaking? *Ugh...*

5) Simon conjures a construct of a V-8 ENGINE.

SIMON BAZ
Hey. It's just another problem. And solving problems is what we do.
(link)
Just think of it as like... stripping an engine. Sure, it can seem complicated at first.
(link)
Overwhelming, even...

PAGE 9

1) Closer. The construct gently DISASSEMBLES and EXPANDS into a hovering cloud of individual components (sorry, I know this is going to be hell to draw!). Simon is reaching for one of them...

SIMON BAZ
But you just break it down, and deal with what's in front of you...

2) Small, close. Simon is holding out a single construct SPARK PLUG. He smiles.

SIMON BAZ
One piece at a time.

3) Jess has moved out to the window. She gazes out across the bleak, barren moonscape. Cold stars.

JESSICA CRUZ
What if I screw up? What if I freeze?
(link)
In front of Hal and John and-- and the entire Corps...

4) Simon comes over to join her at the window.

SIMON BAZ
You'll be fine. Just remember, they're not here to judge you.
(link)
They're here to support you.

5) Pull up high and wide so we're looking down on the GL-ring shaped complex, and the empty amphitheater at its center...

SIMON BAZ
(from complex)
And hey, if that doesn't work, just do what I do...

<u>PAGE 10</u>

1) Full-width slot. Close angle on a CROWD of GREEN LANTERNS - each one of them from a different alien species. Among them, HAL JORDAN and JOHN STEWART. None are smiling.

CAPTION
"... Picture them <u>naked</u>!"

2) Jessica is gazing at a construct-screen showing the alien crowd. She looks worried. She's now wearing her GL uniform, standing in a "green room" waiting area beneath the amphitheater.

JESSICA CRUZ
Okay, the whole naked thing is <u>really</u> not helping.

3) BIG! Simon (uniformed) stands on a dais in the middle of the amphitheater, addressing the crowd (who might be hidden in shadow, so you don't have to draw them all!). Think of it as a TED Talk for Green Lanterns. Simon looks relaxed, strong and confident.

SIMON BAZ
When I was a kid, my family used to make me laugh with stories of the mullah <u>Nasruddin</u>.
(link)
He was like this funny old <u>wise</u> <u>man</u> - who wasn't half as wise as he thought he was...

PAGE 11

1) Widen on Simon as he summons a cartoon-like construct of the medieval Islamic mullah NASRUDDIN (turban, pointy beard). Nasruddin is kneeling, searching the ground in the little patch of light beneath an oil lamp on a pole.

SIMON BAZ
So one night, a passing neighbor sees Nasruddin down on his hands and knees under a street lamp, searching for something.
(link)
"I lost my key," says Nasruddin.

2) Big, for dialogue. Angle on the construct, which now shows Nasruddin pointing off as he talks to a poor medieval Arab by the lamp pole. Nasruddin points. Simon looks up at them from below.

SIMON BAZ
"Where did you lose it?" asks the neighbor. Nasruddin points off and says, *"Over there, by my house."*
(link)
"Then why are you looking here, under the street lamp?" asks the neighbor. And Nasruddin replies --
(link)
"It's too dark over there!"

3) Big, for dialogue. On Simon, strong and confident.

SIMON BAZ
It's an old joke. But I never really grasped the truth of it until I became a Lantern.
(link)
Sure, it's our job to shine a light in the darkness. That's how we help people. But in order to do that, we need to shine a light into our own darkness.
(link)
Illuminate ourselves. Conquer not only our own fear, but our own folly...
(link)
And become our better selves.

1) Close on Jessica intently watching the screen.

JESSICA CRUZ
Simons's totally nailing this...

2) Same angle. Jessica YELPS in fright as Yli'Laautua looms close behind her.

YLI'LAATUA
Terran cultural references are inappropriate.

JESSICA CRUZ
AAH-!

3) Jess and Yli'Laautu.

JESSICA CRUZ
It-- I think the idea is that it's a metaphor for a deeper, more universal --

YLI'LAATUA
Metaphor is inappropriate.

4) Jessica grimaces; puts a hand over her eyes, or pinches the bridge of her nose; a gesture of frustration, bordering on despair.

JESSICA CRUZ
Of course it is...
(link)
Okay. Fine. Perfect.
(link; small text)
There goes my painstakingly researched, lovingly prepared speech...

5) SIMON BAZ descends into the green room - his dais lowering down through a circular door in the ceiling.

SIMON BAZ
Well, I think that went pretty well!
(link)
Jess, you're up next. All set?

JESSICA CRUZ
Ginger peachy...

6) Close on Jess. RABBIT IN THE HEADLIGHTS.

JESSICA CRUZ
Everything's gonna be fine.

1) BIG. Now Jess is standing on the dais on stage. Unlike Simon before, she looks stiff, awkward, terrified.

JESSICA CRUZ
So I had this whole thing prepared, but it was--
(link)
Never mind.
(link)
Fear. It's all about overcoming fear...
(link)
I've had to overcome a lot of fear myself. In fact I'm doing it right now! Hah hah!
(link; small)
... No, don't talk about yourself.

2) Closer on Jess.

JESSICA CRUZ
Wait, let me back up.
(link)
Okay, so, will. Will overcomes fear. And--
The Vaikean word for will is *kamrutaz*--

RING - JESSICA CRUZ
Kah'amrutaazh.

JESSICA CRUZ
Kamra taz.

RING - JESSICA CRUZ
Kah'amrutaazh.

JESSICA CRUZ
That. Which the Lost Lantern must have had, like, in spades.

3) Closer on Jess.

JESSICA CRUZ
Now we translate... that word... as willpower - but in old Vaikean it could also mean willful, which can mean disobedient. Unruly. Which is bad.
(link)
I mean not bad bad, but it has... negative connotations. I don't mean the Lost Lantern was a--
(link)
Wait, this is coming out wrong. What I'm trying to say is, in Vaikean culture, maybe that would be--

4) Jessica's POV. Yli'Laatua stands up in front of Jessica and holds up a stern hand, ordering her to STOP. Like a traffic cop.

YLI'LAATUA
Inappropriate.

1) Full width. A drinks reception in the green room, now filled with alien Green Lanterns. Constructs hands out drinks and canapés. HAL JORDAN, JOHN STEWART and SIMON BAZ stand together, awkward. It's more like a funeral than a celebration.

HAL JORDAN
Well, that... could have been worse?

JOHN STEWART
How, exactly?

SIMON BAZ
Man, I haven't seen a crash-and-burn like that since the speedway tryouts.

2) On Hal, concerned.

HAL JORDAN
Where is Jessica? Is she not joining us for the reception?

3) On Simon.

SIMON BAZ
Probably gone back to the suite to freshen up. Just give her some space.
(link)
If I know Jess...

4) BIG! Jessica FLIES toward us at supersonic speed across the surface of the barren moon, her ringed fist thrust toward us. Tears slipstreaming from her eyes, teeth gritted in anger - at herself. We might see from her emerald green contrail that she has flown from over the far horizon. She's halfway round the planet.

CAPTION
"... She probably just needs some alone time."

JESSICA CRUZ
Okay.
(link)
Okay.
(link)
That was bad.

RING - JESSICA CRUZ
Your adrenaline's spiking through the roof and your heart's going like a jackhammer.
(link)
You doing okay, kiddo?

PAGE 15

1) Jessica SKIDS to a halt on the rugged plain, throwing up a plume of dust behind her. Nearby is a rocky outcrop sticking up out of the ground, about the size of a small house.

JESSICA CRUZ
Fight or flight. Just feeling a little... pent-up.
(link)
I'll go back the reception. Smile, mingle. Play nice. But first I just need a minute.

2) Jessica TURNS IN ANGER as a CONSTRUCT of Yli'Laatua suddenly APPEARS behind her! It's connected to a long thin construct-tentacle that reaches back over the far horizon. He's intruding into her private moment from half a world away.

YLI'LAATUA
Your absence has been noted.

JESSICA CRUZ
For the love of--!

3) On Jess, TENSE but holding it together - barely.

JESSICA CRUZ
It's fine. I'm fine.
(link)
But if you don't mind, I just flew half way around the planet to get a moment to myself.

4) Close two-shot, Yli'Laatua construct on panel left. Jess finally loses her cool and BARKS ANGRILY in his face.

YLI'LAATUA
Solitude is inapp--

JESSICA CRUZ
I KNOW!
(link)
Just give me a minute will you!

5) On the Yli'Laatua construct as it begins to FIZZLE OUT, disappearing --

YLI'LAATUA
Truly the age of heroes is long past.
(link)
We shall never see their like again.
(link)
Tsk.

<u>PAGE 16</u>

1) Wide. Alone now, Jess SCREAMS up at the sky in pure, primal rage! Her ring GLOWS with power --

JESSICA CRUZ
(jagged)
<u>GAAAAAAAH</u>-!

RING - JESSICA CRUZ
Attagirl. Let it out.

2) BIG! Jessica PUNCHES the big rock with all her might - it EXPLODES!

FX
WHAMM

3) Jess GRINS, hands on hips. Happy and relaxed now.

RING - JESSICA CRUZ
Better?

JESSICA CRUZ
<u>Hell</u> yeah.

4) Over the shoulder shot. Jess looks down into the smoking crater - all that remains of the now-destroyed rocky outcrop. The impact has exposed something hidden beneath the rock and dust of the planet's surface. The floor of the crater is smooth, flat, and EMERALD GREEN. (The exposed surface of a planet-sized ring-construct, which was coated with a layer of rock and dust).

<u>LETTERING NOTE</u>: Let's give the Lost Lantern's ring captions a unique style, so readers don't mistake them for Jessica's. Thanks!

RING - LOST LANTERN
Disorderly conduct detected.

JESSICA CRUZ
What the hell? Under the surface - something <u>green</u>...
(link)
It almost looks like...

PAGE 17

1) BIG! Huge SEGMENTED CONSTRUCT TENTACLES rise out of the crater, advancing menacingly around Jess. She rises off the ground, ring glowing, ready to fight back if she has to - but she isn't going to throw the first punch...

RING - LOST LANTERN
Deploying appropriate countermeasures.

JESSICA CRUZ
Whoa, take it easy! Just a misunderstanding. I wasn't attacking anyone - just blowing off a little steam.
(link)
We're all Lanterns here, right? At least I assume you're a Lantern...

2) They tentacles GRAB Jessica!

RING - LOST LANTERN
Analysis: Negative correlation with inducted Corps species.
(link)
Conclusion: Impostor.

JESSICA CRUZ
Wait, let's talk about this!
(link)
Get off me-!

3) Snarling, Jess thrusts out her ringed fist - which suddenly manifests a construct FORCE-BUBBLE around herself! The sphere throws off the tentacles, which recoil, readying to strike again --

JESSICA CRUZ
I said hands off!

RING - JESSICA CRUZ
Will power at 100%.

4) The tentacles wrap themselves around the sphere, trapping Jess inside --

RING - LOST LANTERN
Resistance is inappropriate.
(link)
Enhancing countermeasures.

JESSICA CRUZ
(from bubble)
Hey-!

5) INSIDE the bubble, Jess strains with all her might, ring glowing bright. Teeth gritted with exertion, focusing her willpower. But the tentacles are too strong --

RING - JESSICA CRUZ
Willpower at 96%

RING - LOST LANTERN
Willpower at 255%.

JESSICA CRUZ

That's-- not even-- math-!

PAGE 18

1) BIG! Beneath Jess, the ground OPENS UP into a huge square shaft the size of a football field! Dizzying perspective. The vertical shaft descends all the way down to the planet's core - and is entirely a green-walled Lantern-construct. The tentacles have emerged from this shaft, and now completely enclose Jess's protective bubble. Rock and dust spill off the edge into the widening maw --

RING - LOST LANTERN
Suppress.
(link)
Restrain.
(link)
Detain.

2) Jess inside her force bubble, which is now SQUEEZING in close around her, crushed inwards. Ring GLOWING --

JESSICA CRUZ
Simon, do you read me?
(link)
Simon? Hal? John-?

RING - JESSICA CRUZ
No good, J-Bird! Whatever's generating this construct, it's blocking our comms!

<u>PAGE 19</u>

1) Closer on her. Instead of resting, she suddenly relaxes, holding her hands up at head-level - not so much a gesture of surrender as a gesture of peace. Her forces bubble has DISAPPEARED, leaving her at the mercy of the tentacles.

JESSICA CRUZ
This is getting me nowhere...

RING - JESSICA CRUZ
You've dropped your armor! Don't quit on me now, kiddo --
(link)
You can fight this thing!

2) The tentacles wrap around Jessica. But she looks calm, no longer resisting. This is her choice.

JESSICA CRUZ
What's the point? The more we fight, the stronger it gets...

3) BIG! Now completely encased in tentacles, Jess is pulled down into the bottomless shaft, sinking away from us...

JESSICA CRUZ
(within tentacles)
... So maybe we should stop fighting and <u>listen</u>.

PAGE 20

1) Back at the reception, which is now very crowded. Simon Baz is reaching for a tray of weird-looking alien canapés, held by an alien waiter construct. Hal Jordan and John Stewart are nearby chatting with weird aliens - not part of Simon's conversation, but close enough to overhear and turn to him in the following panels.

SIMON BAZ
These things smell amazing. Are they *halal...*?

WAITER CONSTRUCT
The dish consists of spiced vegetable matter containing no intoxicants or euphorics.

SIMON BAZ
Then I'm good! Hit me up.

2) Closer on Simon, about to eat a canapé when he gets an alert message from his ring.

RING - SIMON BAZ
Alert. Lantern Cruz no longer registers in this sector.

SIMON BAZ
What? Jess left the planet?

RING - SIMON BAZ
Negative. Zero telemetry of Lantern Cruz departing this system.

3) Hal and John have stepped over to join to Simon, who is now frowning, mildly concerned...

HAL JORDAN
She left... without leaving?

JOHN STEWART
That doesn't make sense.

SIMON BAZ
Ring, gimme Jessica's last known coordinates...

4) Wide. Simon, Hal and John fly AWAY from us. Our POV is looking out at them through a wide force-field window. YLI-LAATUA stands with his back to us on panel left, watching them go. The idea is to suggest that he might have something to do with Jessica's disappearance, though he hasn't...

SIMON BAZ
She could be in trouble!

5) Wide. Simon, Hal and John arrive at the site of Jessica's disappearance. The shaft is now covered by a huge square of opaque green construct, the size of a football field (the dirt covering the construct-planet fell into the shaft, which then closed up again).

HAL JORDAN
A Lantern construct! Is it hers...?

SIMON BAZ
Jess! Hey Jessica! You in there?

<u>PAGE 21</u>

1) Wide. Simon stands on the construct surface, puzzled. Mid foreground, Hal crouches in the foreground, gently touching his ringed fist to the green surface. John Stewart frowns, all business, taking charge.

SIMON BAZ
Nothing. Maybe it's some kind of Vaikean artifact?

HAL JORDAN
My ring can't seem to interface with it. Strange...

JOHN STEWART
Yli'Laatua, we have a situation here. Could use a little local know-how.
(link)
Yli'Laatua, do you copy...?

2) WIDE. The familiar construct TENTACLES rise menacingly from the green surface. Hal and Simon step back in surprise --

SIMON BAZ
Whoa-!

HAL JORDAN
Easy now...

RING - LOST LANTERN
<u>Identify</u>.

3) John Stewart, defiant, taking charge --

JOHN STEWART
<u>John Stewart</u>, Corps Commander. Identify <u>yourself</u>, Lantern!
(link)
Why are you <u>jamming</u> us? Where is <u>Jessica Cruz</u>?

4) Wide. The tentacles encircle the Lanterns - not attacking yet, but closing in...

RING - LOST LANTERN
Impostors detected.

HAL JORDAN
Impostors? We were <u>formally</u> <u>invited</u> to Vaikea!

5) John holds out his ringed fist, defiant --

JOHN STEWART
<u>Stand down</u> - or we <u>take</u> you down!

PAGE 22

1) Close on the tentacle tip, poised like a snake about to strike --

RING - LOST LANTERN
There is no Vaikea.
(link)
Duplicity detected.
(link)
Resistance constitutes infraction.

2) The tentacles attack! The Lanterns defend themselves with ring constructs --

RING - LOST LANTERN
Suppress.
(link)
Restrain.
(link)
Detain.

3) BIG! The three Lanterns stand back-to-back, fists out, teeth gritted with effort. Their constructs are being CRUSHED by the tentacles! They're putting EVERYTHING they've got into it, refusing to back down. In response the tentacles have grown bigger, more powerful. Channel some Jack Kirby here! Titanic forces!

SIMON BAZ
Fight back!

HAL JORDAN
No surrender!

JOHN STEWART
Give 'em all you got!

RING - LOST LANTERN
Enhancing countermeasures.
(link)
Willpower at 1,487%.

<u>PAGE 23</u>

1) Small, very close on Jessica. Her eyes groggily fluttering awake. She's lying with her cheek against on a flat green floor, green light all around...

JESSICA CRUZ
(ragged)
Hnnghh...
(link)
Where...?

2) Jessica crouches, unsteadily getting to her feet. We widen a little to see she's in a hexagonal cell made of PURE CONSTRUCT ENERGY. The room is maybe 10 feet across. There's a construct bed-slab, toilet, sink. Everything is made of clean, hard lines, devoid of warmth or comfort. Spartan and dehumanizing. Ahead of her here, one wall of the cell is made of flat, straight bars.

JESSICA CRUZ
Oh.
(link)
Yeah.

3) BIG! Pull waaaay back to reveal that Jessica's cell is just a tiny speck - the bars just a suggestion of lines - in a HUGE cell-block that stretches away for miles. The cell block hangs like a skyscraper-sized stalactite from the ceiling of a vast chamber, part of the "planet's" interior. And we can see other such stalactite blocks stretching away into the distance in orderly rows. EVERYTHING is made of green construct. The entire planet.

JESSICA CRUZ
(from stalactite cell)
<u>Now</u> I remember.

1) She turns back into her cell, thoughtful now, pacing...

JESSICA CRUZ
The entire planet is a Lantern construct! But for some reason it doesn't recognize us...
(link)
So what happened to the real Vaikea?

RING - JESSICA CRUZ
Like you said - the records were lost eons ago.

JESSICA CRUZ
History replaced by myth...
(link)
The legend of the Lost Lantern - sacrificing himself against the forces of chaos...
(link)
"Disorderly elements"...

2) Jess scowls, but play it for comedy.

RING - JESSICA CRUZ
Where you going with this, J-Bird?

JESSICA CRUZ
Just a hunch. But you know the old saying - when trapped in the heart of an ancient green prison planet, try anything!

RING - JESSICA CRUZ
That's a saying?

JESSICA CRUZ
Shut up. It is now.

3) Jess has a sudden idea.

JESSICA CRUZ
Hey! You remember when I updated the operating system and it bricked my phone?

RING - JESSICA CRUZ
And this is relevant... how?

4) FLASHBACK. Civilian Jess stands at the support desk of a Queen Industries store - like an Apple store but with the Q logo. She's ANGRILY pointing at a dead phone in her hand. The Q-store support desk "helper" guy just shrugs, like hey, not my problem, lady.

CAPTION
"The phone was an old piece of junk, couldn't handle the new system. But hell if I was gonna get punked into buying a new one.

CAPTION
"Like Queen Industries needs the money, right...?

1) FLASHBACK. Jess at home, hunched over her laptop in the dark, her phone plugged into it. Poring over a YouTube video with fierce concentration.

CAPTION
"So I had to go through this whole thing to downgrade the OS back to the old version it would actually run..."

2) Big, for dialogue. Back to the cell. Jess's body language looks urgent, impatient --

RING - JESSICA CRUZ
Reminiscing about everyday life. Perfectly understandable stress reaction. Carry on.
(link)
We can get back to the immediate crisis whenever you feel ready--

JESSICA CRUZ
You're not listening!
(link)
Look, for this construct to be mistaken for Vaikea, it must have been here for millions of years...
(link)
And you're a brand new ring!
(link)
Y'know. Relatively speaking.

3) Jess holds her ringed hand up close to her face, speaking directly to her ring. She looks pleased with herself now.

RING - JESSICA CRUZ
Wait, you're not seriously suggesting--

JESSICA CRUZ
You haven't been able to interface with whoever's ring is generating this place because you're running a newer operating system.
(link)
So let's downgrade you!

4) Jess stands looking cocky, pleased with herself, hands on hips.

RING - JESSICA CRUZ
I hate to break this to you, Jessica, but I'm an advanced neural interface designed by hyper-intelligent inter-dimensional beings to generate willpower-based hard-light constructs in defense of all sentient life...
(link)
... Not a phone!

JESSICA CRUZ
Yeah, but can you run Candy Crush?

RING - JESSICA CRUZ
This is the worst plan ever.

PAGE 26

A page of identical full-width slot-shaped panels.

1) Hal, John and Simon are TRAPPED within the maximum security area of the prison planet. Each is held immobile in a cruciform pose by MASSIVE, solid-looking constructs. Each of their rings is entombed in a bulky containment box, preventing them from creating their own constructs. They literally cannot move a muscle, only speak.

HAL JORDAN
There's nothing more dangerous than a rogue Lantern!
(link)
We have to find a way to fight back!

JOHN STEWART
I've never backed down from a fight and I'm not about to start now.
(link)
It's a contest of wills. We have to work together. On three...

2) SAME ANGLE. They all SNARL with exertion of sheer will - but it's useless.

JOHN STEWART
One. Two...
(link)
Three!

3) SAME ANGLE. Identical panel.

4) SAME ANGLE. Hal and John look peeved. Simon looks wry.

SIMON BAZ
So, *uh*...
(link)
Anybody wanna play *I Spy*?

1) Close on Jessica's ring, as she holds it up close to examine it.

JESSICA CRUZ
Is the downgrade working? Are you feeling, I dunno...
(link)
... Dumber?

RING - JESSICA CRUZ
My mind is going... I can feel it...
(link)
Daisy, Daisy, give me your answer do...

JESSICA CRUZ
Very funny.

2) Wide. Jess holds out her ringed fist and her cell bars OPEN!

RING - JESSICA CRUZ
Downgrade complete. Let's see if the system recognizes us now.
(link)
Accessing...

RING - LOST LANTERN
Security scan detected. Responding.
(link)
Lantern: database mismatch. Sector: database mismatch.
(link)
Authentication: Provisional. Query: Synchronize database? Y/N

JESSICA CRUZ
Now we're talking! At least it understands I'm a Lantern now - and that's enough to get me out of the cell.
(link)
Now let's go find some answers!

3) Jessica FLIES toward us through the vast subterranean complex. Her ring conjures up a 3D MAP of the entire planet, made up of nested spheres. A RED DOT at the map's core.

RING - JESSICA CRUZ
Accessing schematic.

JESSICA CRUZ
My God... Billions of stasis cells... and every one holding a sleeping Vaikean!
(link)
They can't all be bad guys... can they?

RING - JESSICA CRUZ
If they are, you might want to think twice about freeing them.
(link)
There. The complex is being generated by a ring at the core.

4) Jess flies down away from us into the depths of the planet. This vast interior space has no obvious floor; it's designed for beings with flight.

JESSICA CRUZ
I'm trying to imagine how much willpower it must take to maintain a place this size for eons...

RING - JESSICA CRUZ
Willpower... or willfulness.

5) Close on Jess, tough and determined.

JESSICA CRUZ
Kah'amrutaazh.

1) Jess swoops towards the planet's core. The construct energy radiates out from this point the like the heart of a 3D web. There, a YOUNG VAIKEAN GREEN LANTERN is curled up in a tight fetal ball; head tucked down, arms crossed across his chest. His ring GLOWS brightly. But we won't be able to get a proper look at him on this page, as Jess isn't able to get close.

JESSICA CRUZ
There! That's gotta be him...
(link)
The Lost Lantern!

2) As Jess tentatively approaches, CONSTRUCT TENTACLES rise up like cobras ready to strike, tips glowing. The Lost Lantern remains comatose. Jess holds her hands out, placatory, de-escalating...

CONSTRUCT
Identify.

JESSICA CRUZ
Easy, I'm a fellow Lantern. Can we talk?
(link)
I figured maybe you could use a little backup. I mean you clearly have a lot on your hands...

3) The tentacles look away from Jess, looking up and around at the complex around them. Jess echoes the gesture, spreading her arms to say "look at all this."

CONSTRUCT
Disorderly elements.

JESSICA CRUZ
Exactly! Forces of chaos, am I right?
(link)
People just winging it, running with scissors, coloring outside the lines. Crazy!

4) Jess tries to move towards the Lost Lantern, but the tentacles swoop down aggressively, blocking her path, threatening --

JESSICA CRUZ
Now if I can just--

CONSTRUCT
Restricted.

JESSICA CRUZ
It's okay, I just want to talk to--

CONSTRUCT
Restricted.

5) On Jess, quietly peeved.

JESSICA CRUZ
Okay, okay! No problem. I wouldn't want to be... inappropriate.

1) Close on the Lost Lantern, still comatose, curled up in a tight ball. Our first proper look at him.

RING - JESSICA CRUZ
The Lost Lantern seems to be in some form of self-imposed stasis.
(link)
His consciousness is connected to a loop of holographic memory.

2) Jessica stands her ground, facing the tentacles that block her path in the foreground.

JESSICA CRUZ
Trapped in his own past. Reliving his own sacrifice...
(link)
Hook me in.

RING - JESSICA CRUZ
Jess, if you go in there, I may not be able to get you out again.
(link)
Your willpower is no match for his. You could end up trapped in there forever.

JESSICA CRUZ
Maybe this isn't about willpower. Maybe it's about something else.

3) On Jess, fearful but determined. She's about to walk into the fire.

JESSICA CRUZ
There are billions of lives at stake here.
(link)
Weighed against that, what's one more?

4) CLOSE, slot. Jess goes down on one knee and touches her ringed fist to the green surface. Lines of brighter green energy radiate out from her ring, spiderwebbing out across the floor in angular patterns, like a circuit diagram, making a connection...

JESSICA CRUZ
(off panel)
If I don't at least try...
(link)
... What right do I have to call myself a Green Lantern?

5) Close slot on Jessica's wide EYE, lines of light racing out as she accesses the virtual memory...

RING - JESSICA CRUZ
Accessing holographic memory.

PAGE 30

1) BIG! Vaikea's ancient past (we are inside the virtual hologram memory now). A MOB of ANGRY VAIKEA PROTESTERS raise fists and placards in the foreground. Above them floats a high-tech Vaikean PALACE.

LOST LANTERN
(from palace)
I-- I am unworthy of this honor...

2) A great hall in the palace. The LOST LANTERN kneels before the AUTARCHS - a council of stern, robed Vaikeans. The planet's ultra-strict rulers.

AUTARCH
Yes.
(link)
And yet you are the first.
(link)
The first of our people to wield such a weapon. The first to be granted such power. And so we ask --
(link)
Do you answer to order, or chaos?

LOST LANTERN
I obey the law, of course.

3) Close on a stern Autarch.

AUTARCH
We Autarchs are the law.
(link)
Would this Green Lantern Corps usurp our rightful and hereditary power?

4) The LL raises his head to face them --

LOST LANTERN
Of course not. The Corps would never force its values upon a culture--

AUTARCH
(off right, or panel below)
Then you answer to us, as must all faithful Vaikeans.
(link)
The horde clamors for democracy and self-expression. These are not our ways.

5) The Autarch sneers.

AUTARCH
Such chaotic emotions are inappropriate. They must be subsumed by will.
(link)
You will make the rabble submit to the rule of order - or they will be incarcerated.

PAGE 31

1) The LL stands before the Autarchs, torn between desire to defy his masters and respect for their authority --

AUTARCH
The faithful have already left Vaikea to spread our truth among the stars. In time they may return.
(link)
Only the faithless remain. These disorderly elements must be removed if society is to prosper.

LOST LANTERN
I can't imprison the entire population-!

2) Close on the Autarch.

AUTARCH
Is this will, or willfulness?
(link)
You will obey our law - or you will be stripped of your status. Become a non-person. An outcast.
(link)
The universe would know our people's shame. For you...
(link)
You would be our shame.

3) LL bows.

LOST LANTERN
I obey.

4) BIG. Outside, the LL swoops over the angry protesters, SCOOPING them up into a construct-bubble!

RING - LOST LANTERN
Suppress.
(link)
Restrain.

5) Close on a construct cell-block. Angry Vaikeans frozen in stasis behind a wall of green energy.

PRISONER
Help us-!

RING - LOST LANTERN
Detain.

PAGE 32

1) The LL STANDS at the heart of his construct prison planet - he looks strong and determined, ringed fist held aloft. God-like creator of this world. A GREEN CONSTRUCT HOLOGRAM is JESSICA CRUZ is walking towards him - she has projected herself into this virtual memory.

JESSICA CRUZ
Oh, you poor kid.
(link)
You really are lost, aren't you...?

LOST LANTERN
Are-- Are you here to judge me?

2) On Jess, wry and a little sad for him.

JESSICA CRUZ
We don't judge people. We help them.
That's what being a Lantern is all about.
(link)
Supposed to be, anyway...
(link)
But all this? Not okay.

3) The LL is looking uncertain and guilty now, lowering his fist. Jessica shrugs.

JESSICA CRUZ
Look, I get it now. The Autarchs put you in an impossible position. You could be loyal to your rulers or loyal to the values of the Corps - but not both.
(link)
So you cut yourself off. Hid away. Locked yourself up in a cage of self-loathing...
(link)
And your people along with it.

4) BIG. Flashback. Space. The planet Vaikea is DESTROYED by a SHOCKWAVE of superheated plasma. The debris bounces off the indestructible, moon-sized GREEN CONSTRUCT BUBBLE that was in orbit around it.

CAPTION
"So when Vaikea's sun went nova, there was no Lantern here to save it. The planet was destroyed...

CAPTION
"... and the debris coalesced around this inferiority complex you'd constructed for yourself."

1) The LL sinks to his knees, guilt-stricken.

LOST LANTERN
I obeyed the law... and betrayed the Corps...
(link)
No-one... must ever know... my shame...

2) Jess puts a consoling hand on LL's shoulder.

JESSICA CRUZ
Too late. But hey, we all screw up sometimes, right?
(link)
Listen, what you've done here is... unbelievable. The willpower it must have taken to keep this place in stasis for eons...

3) Close on Jess, smiling, kind.

JESSICA CRUZ
But it's time to let go of that burden. The Autarchs are history.
(link)
And trust me, you've got backup. Like you wouldn't believe.

4) Jess and the LL, lines of light racing out of them as they EXIT the virtual memory.

JESSICA CRUZ
C'mon. Let's free these people and go home.

1) A GL Sector House in deep space...

YLI'LAATUA
(from station)
You stand accused of betraying the values of the Green Lantern Corps.
(link)
How do you plead?

2) Lost Lantern stands in the courtroom dock, head bowed, ashamed. He wears huge high-tech manacles. Vaikean civilian garb.

LOST LANTERN
Guilty.

3) Go wide to reveal the scene: a high-tech courtroom deep in the station. YLI-LAATUA, for the prosecution, speaks to SIMON BAZ on a witness stand.

YLI'LAATUA
The prosecution calls Lantern Simon Baz of Sector 2814.
(link)
The Lost Lantern attacked you. This is correct.

SIMON BAZ
Well, as I understand it, the construct tentacles were semi-autonomous.
(link)
Those old-time rings were crazy powerful, and they thought we attacked them first, so...

PAGE 35

1) Yli'Laatua.

YLI'LAATUA
They escalated the conflict.

2) Simon shrugs.

SIMON BAZ
So did we! Which only made things worse.
(link)
We fought. Jess talked.
(link)
And guess what? Talking worked out better.

3) Yli'Laatua scowls.

YLI'LAATUA
Explain. Are you a witness for the prosecution, or the defense?

4) Simon, mild and calm.

SIMON BAZ
I'm not really interested in picking a side. I just call it like I see it.
(link)
The Lost Lantern screwed up, for sure. But he thought he was doing the right thing...
(link)
And he's spent more time paying for it than I can even imagine.

5) Yli'Laatua, peeved.

YLI'LAATUA
Tsk.

PAGE 36

1) Later. ON JOHN STEWART, grim, as he delivers the verdict of the tribunal. He's flanked by Hal Jordan and Yli'Laatua.

JOHN STEWART
Lost Lantern. It is the judgment of this tribunal that you should be stripped of your power ring and status as a Green Lantern...
(link)
... and incarcerated in a construct facility for a period not less than one million years.

2) Lost Lantern sags in despair.

LOST LANTERN
I-- I humbly accept the judgment of the tribunal.

3) Big, for dialogue. On John Stewart - the hint of a smile just edging into his grim facade.

JOHN STEWART
I wasn't finished.
(link)
Given the extenuating circumstances...
(link)
Namely, that you were obeying a direct order from your rulers, and saved your entire race from the Vaikean supernova...
(link)
This sentence will be applied retroactively. As time served.

4) Close, small. Lost lantern looks up at us, stunned --

LOST LANTERN
(small text)
... What?

1) Hal Jordan smiles.

HAL JORDAN
You locked yourself in a prison of your own making for longer than we can even imagine.
(link)
It's time for you to learn - along with the rest of your people - what it means to be free.

2) The Lost Lantern looks stunned as the manacles OPEN and fall off his wrists.

LOST LANTERN
I-- I don't understand...
(link)
I'm free to go?

FX
K-CHAK

3) Wide on the room. John gestures to Jessica and Simon as they step forward, smiling.

JOHN STEWART
You will serve parole under the watch of Green Lanterns Jessica Cruz and Simon Baz.
(link)
They will observe you - and guide you - as you adjust to a universe that has changed beyond all recognition since your time.

4) Hal puts a brotherly arm around the LL's shoulders and leads him from the dock. LL looks shellshocked, almost in a daze. He can't believe it.

LOST LANTERN
I-- I am unworthy--

HAL JORDAN
We all make mistakes, kid. I've been there. Believe me.
(link)
And we all deserve a second chance.

PAGE 38

1) Wide. Simon and Jess walk along a high-tech corridor in the sector house, with Lost Lantern between them. They're friendly and cheerful, he's forlorn.

LOST LANTERN
I have brought such shame upon my people...

JESSICA CRUZ
You saved your people! They don't remember a thing - and now they finally have the freedom they were fighting for.

LOST LANTERN
Forgiveness is inappropriate--

SIMON BAZ
Dude, enough of that.

2) On Jessica, smiling as she opens a door...

JESSICA CRUZ
You judge yourself too harshly. Been there. Bought the T-shirt.
(link)
But we're gonna introduce you to this ancient Earth custom designed to overcome feelings of self-consciousness and inadequacy...

3) BIG! They lead LL into a station NIGHTCLUB! It's full of Vaikean civilians - who turn to us and CHEER! They're happy, exuberant, excited, partying - a wild mish-mash of different clothing styles. The complete opposite of the uptight Autarchs. A group of Vaikean friends LAUGH and sing on stage. Jess and Simon grin; the LL looks stunned.

JESSICA CRUZ
It's called karaoke.
(link)
You're gonna love it!

END